

Message Text

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PAGE 01 GABORO 00738 162328Z

ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

HA-05 /064 W

-----015635 171047Z /13

R 150909Z MAR 78

FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1795

INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

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CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PDEV SF BC

SUBJ: SOBUKWE MEMORIAL SERVICE IN GABORONE

1. AUDIENCE OF SEVERAL HUNDRED, MOSTLY REFUGEES, PACKED THE GABORONE TOWN HALL MARCH 11 FOR MEMORIAL SERVICE IN HONOR OF ROBERT SOBUKWE. PRC EMBASSY REPRESENTATION CONSISTED OF FIVE STAFF. LIBYAN CHARGE AND UK REP ALSO ATTENDED AS DID I ACCOMPANIED BY DCM AND IRO. NO RANKING GOB OFFICIALS WERE IN EVIDENCE.

2. SERVICE WAS ORGANIZED BY BOTSWANA PAC LEADERSHIP; IT CONSISTED OF THREE-HOUR MARATHON OF SERMON, SPEECHES AND SPECIAL MUSIC. PAC PASSED OUT COPIES OF PAMPHLET TITLED "SOBUKWE OF AZANIA" WHICH PROVIDED BRIEF SOBUKWE'S BIOGRAPHY AND INCLUDED A NUMBER OF QUOTES FROM HIS WRITINGS (COPY POUCHED AF/S, ATTN MCCORMICK).

3. AMONG THE HIGH POINTS OF THE LENGTHY PROGRAM WAS POLISHED
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PAGE 02 GABORO 00738 162328Z

AND MODERATE SPEECH GIVEN BY A "COMRADE FROM THE HOME FRONT" WHO PRESUMABLY ARRIVED FROM SOUTH AFRICA FOR THE OCCASION. HIS EVOCATION OF SOBUKWE'S PERSONALITY WAS ACCOMPANIED BY CALLS FOR ALL RACES TO LIVE TOGETHER. NADIR OF THE AFTERNOON WAS REACHED WHEN LOCAL ZANU (MUGABE) LEADER MASAYA WAS CALLED UPON TO SPEAK AS "REPRESENTATIVE" FROM ZIMBABWE. HE GAVE SIMPLISTIC MARXIST "ANALYSIS" OF "OBJECTIVE CONDITIONS"

IN SOUTH AFRICA WHICH THOROUGHLY DOWNGRADED IMPORTANCE OF SOBUKWE'S PERSONALITY AND ACHIEVEMENTS; NOT SURPRISINGLY, UK, US AND FRG INVESTMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA TURNED OUT TO BE THE "OBJECTIVE CONDITIONS" EXPECTED TO FORCE CHANGE IN SOUTH AFRICA. APPARENTLY UNAWARE THAT HIS PF CHIEFS ARE CONSIDERING ATTENDING CONFERENCE THAT WOULD INCLUDE MUZOREWA AND SITHOLE, MASAYA CATEGORICALLY CONDEMNED INTERNAL SETTLEMENT. HE MADE NO MENTION OF AAP. CONCLUSION OF HIS SPEECH WAS MET WITH SILENCE FROM CROWD WHICH WAS COMPOSED PRIMARILY OF SOUTH AFRICAN REFUGEES WHOSE AFFECTION FOR SOBUKWE AS MAN AND POLITICAL LEADER WAS OBVIOUS.

4. PAC REP MANTSHONTSHO DELIVERED A RAMBLING AND SOMETIMES CONTRADICTORY "MAIN SPEECH". AT TIMES HE APPEARED TO ABANDON SOBUKWE'S DOCTRINE OF RACIAL TOLERANCE IN FAVOR OF BITTER DENUNCIATIONS OF "WHITE RACE" WHICH OPPRESSES BLACK SOUTH AFRICANS. APPARENTLY AWARE THAT HE HAD GONE TOO FAR, HE HALF-HEARTEDLY REMINDED HIS AUDIENCE THAT IT WAS NOT PAC'S OBJECTIVE TO "PUSH AFRIKANERS INTO THE SEA". DURING ONE OF THESE MORE MODERATE PASSAGES OF HIS SPEECH, MANTSHONTSHO POINTED TO BOTSWANA AS MODEL NON-RACIAL SOCIETY WHICH SOUTH AFRICA SHOULD TRY TO COPY.

5. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH TOWN HALL WAS PACKED IN SOBUKWE'S HONOR, THE MIDDLE-AGED PAC LEADERSHIP FAILED TO FIRE UP THE YOUNGER SOUTH AFRICAN REFUGEES WHO DOMINATED THE AUDIENCE. GENERATION LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 GABORO 00738 162328Z

GAP WHICH HAS RETARDED PAC RECRUITMENT AMONG SOUTH AFRICAN REFUGEE STUDENTS HERE APPEARED TO BE WIDENED RATHER THAN BRIDGED BY MOST OF SPEAKERS AT MEMORIAL SERVICE. NORLAND

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Disposition Action: RELEASED
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